



EATON BRAY
Rural District Council.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,

JOHN ALEX. HEDGES, M.R.C.S., &c.,

FOR THE YEAR 1904.

1905.

TO THE
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL
OF
EATON BRAY.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I have pleasure in presenting my Annual Report for the year 1904 just closed, as to the District of eight parishes, named after its largest parish—Eaton Bray.

The year was singularly unlike its predecessor in its fine, hot summer, ripening the corn and fruit, so important to an agricultural neighbourhood like ours. As to the population. I do not think we can claim any increase on the numbers recorded at the census of 1901; village populations being more remarkable for losing their young men to the big towns, than keeping them in their own localities. The number of 4,101 is the census number, and upon that I have based my calculations. As to the

BIRTH-RATE,

I find the number to be 103, giving a rate of 25·11 per thousand, an increase on year 1903, which gave 100 births, a gain on year 1902, which gave 96 births; year 1901 giving 101, year 1900 gave 103, and previous to that, lower numbers, getting down to 1896 with only 84 births.

DEATH-RATE.

The number of Deaths was 60, giving a rate of 14·63 per thousand, higher than the three previous years, which gave numbers 43, 51, and 46, but year previous to that, 66 deaths were recorded; whilst as far back as 1895, seventy-one deaths occurred in the District, but this was the great year of Typhoid at Eaton Bray, alarming the then Medical Officer, whose representations caused enquiries resulting in the greater push for Sanitary Reforms.

Of the Deaths, one man died in the Union House at Leighton Buzzard, who, belonging to our smallest parish (Tilsworth), reached a very advanced age, though afflicted with sarcoma on the face (a disease ^{or} very analogous to cancer) from which he died. After him 59 deaths were left in their respective parishes, of which 1 was enteric fever, 3 enteritis, 1 erysipelas, 1 from pulmonary consumption, 4 from kindred tubercular diseases, 5 from cancer (using the word in its general meaning), 6 from bronchitis, 3 from pneumonia, 1 from premature birth, and 9 from heart disease; the remaining 25 from all other causes. Of the mortality of children under one year old, the numbers were 10; much higher than the three previous years, till we get down to 1900, when it was as high as 13; the number of 10 for 1904 gives a rate of 97·08 per thousand births registered. I note that in 1894, the deaths under one year were as many as 19, and the District then contained only five parishes, whereas, since then, through the dissolution of the Woburn Union, our parishes became increased from five to eight; so it is a matter of congratulation that infantile mortality is better than it has been, though an increase has to be reckoned for 1904; still, even then, 10 infant deaths in a district of eight, is better than 19 in five parishes—showing, I think, by fair inference, that labours in that direction by sanitary lecturers, and so forth, towards educating mothers in the management and better up-bringing of infants, has borne good fruit; but more remains to be done, the uprise of 10 deaths on 6 of the previous year and 5 of the year before that, seems discouraging.

ZYMOTIC DEATHS.

One death from enteric fever, 1 from phthisis, 4 from other tubercular diseases, 1 from erysipelas, 5 from cancer. With regard to (strictly speaking) deaths from zymotic causes, we will put the enteric fever from Eaton Bray, and the erysipelas from Heath, as two zymotic deaths in a population of 4,101, or a rate per thousand of 0·48—of phthisis, the rate would be 0·24—of other tubercular diseases, 0·97—of respiratory organs other than phthisis, the rate is 2·11.

Deaths over 65 years of age (twenty-four in a population of 4,101), work out at 5·85 per thousand.

SCHOOL CLOSURE.

We have had our usual events of school closing in the year, owing to infantile maladies of an infectious character, which, bottling the children up in one building tends to increase. The schools of four parishes were affected—namely, Heath-and-Reach, in February, from whooping-cough—Egginton, in February, from chicken-pox—in May, at Tebworth (Church) School, for measles; and again in November, we had to contend with both measles and whooping-cough respectively, in the mixed and infants' departments at Eaton Bray. The Schools were at once visited by myself as soon as information was received, and closure obtained by the

signing of my paper by two members of the District Council. The opportunity was at once taken to disinfect the School buildings thoroughly, so as to have them safe by the time the children returned. What an object lesson in school closure whooping-cough presents—one child going into school and coughing, extends his complaint over the entire school; it is infectious in the breath, and other complaints of an infectious character are extended obviously by the nearness of individuals to each other, as in a school but less markedly so than in whooping-cough; but no sooner is school closure proposed, than up jump lots of persons who ought to know better, saying—what is the use of closing school, because the children are together out-of-doors, they get together playing in the open directly they are out of school, forgetting the free current of air which obtains out-of-doors, the air being never still. A singular combination of circumstances occurred in Eaton Bray parish last autumn, an epidemic of typhoid (enteric) fever, and yet I did *not* propose the closure of Eaton Bray Schools; at the same time, I did (acting as *pro. tem.* Medical Officer of Health for *Wing Rural District*) close the schools of the closely adjoining parish of Edlesborough, where the epidemic came from. This reference to occurrences in another District, in an Annual Report for Eaton Bray, might be criticised by a casual observer, but a deeper insight into the whole matter would convince him of its necessity. At all events, I reported the matter to the Beds. County Medical Officer, who thanked me for my communication, and offered any help that he could conveniently render; there is no County Medical Officer for Bucks. (in which Wing Rural District containing Edlesborough parish is situated). About the second week in July, the attendance began to fall off at Edlesborough School, and on the 22nd, I agreed with the school-master to anticipate holidays by breaking up school without a closing order; it will be noted that this course was taken before I had one single notification. In the course of my investigations, I heard of one family consisting of, besides the parents, eight children at home, that there had been illness and recovery, and again at the (then) present time illness in the house. I called at the house, pointing out to them that the illness might (and from the sequence of cases probably) be of an infectious character, I was sent for personally to attend in the evening, with the result that the cases were sent by me to the Grove Hospital, for Bucks. (not Grovebury, which is for Beds.); but I incidentally put this in to show how infectious diseases may be extended through house-holders doing without a doctor. Why all this affects Eaton Bray District, is this—that the parish of Eaton Bray is a long, straggling one, for the most part consisting of its principal street which culminates (by passing over a certain brook) in Edlesborough, it will thus be seen why so many Eaton Bray children attend the Edlesborough School for its nearness, and why, although the epidemic affected Eaton Bray, it was simply confined to that part of the parish which included Summerleys, which has a history of epidemics of Typhoid, and its epidemicity is referred to in the London Medical Inspector's Report, that gentleman, however, gave his entire adhesion to my theory that the epidemic of 1904, owed its origin to the foulness of

the drinking water in the well at Edlesborough School, in which, by the resulting illness extending into our own District, we are necessarily interested. The well in question, is in the school-yard behind the buildings, with nothing to show its site, as pipes go from it to pumps in the house. A former master was asked to show where it was, which he kindly did, and when the crown was taken off, the smell the men said, was "enough to knock them backwards;" that the emptyings from the closets had not been carried far enough away, was sufficiently clear, but the heap, only sparsely covered with ashes, and almost, if not quite over, the site of the well itself, and exposed to the heat of the summer of 1904 was eminently contributing, by fouling the water, to spread a water-borne disease like typhoid; but I am not writing a Wing Rural Annual Report, I am writing our Eaton Bray Rural Annual Report, but in reporting a typhoid outbreak at Eaton Bray, I am compelled to give the causation.

Before entering on our round with the Medical Inspector from London, I incidentally mentioned that I thought typhoid was infectious from person to person, contrary to the generally received opinion, in which he agreed with me, and later on, during the progress of the epidemic, the illness in the Room family seemed abundantly to prove the infectiousness of typhoid. Their children came home ill from the Edlesborough School, then the father fell, then the mother, then a daughter who was out at service, but was summoned home to assist, she fell ill in her turn, and your Sanitary Officers had to take an adjoining cottage as a home for the nurses that we were compelled to obtain—thus converting the Room's cottage into a temporary hospital.

Towards the latter end of the year, we had another typhoid outbreak to contend with in another part of the District—namely, the parish of Heath. The first was a young married woman in Thomas Street, at the upper portion of same, where I could discover nothing particularly unhygienic in the surroundings, beyond the primitive arrangements of a village neighbourhood, and in a proprietary street not taken over by the parish, because all the owners do not agree to put the roadway right as a necessary preliminary. A nurse had to be obtained for her, and comforts, &c., at the Council's expense. Later on, four more notifications of Typhoid were sent to me, and later on, two more—five of these were members of the same family in a very slummy, low part of the village; the other one, making six (of this later lot), was a girl who had nursed her aunt in Thomas Street, above referred to, and making seven in all at Heath. The first, as above described, was treated at home, the later six were admitted (by personal pleading by myself) into the Urban Hospital at Grovebury, at the expense of the Eaton Bray District Council; thus instances keep multiplying to show what a disadvantage we are under through having no Isolation Hospital to take cases to. There is, however, I am glad to say, an agreement between the Eaton Bray Council and the Dunstable Corporation and the Luton Rural Council to found a

Hospital about half-a-mile the other side of Dunstable, of which the building exists, but wants adding to and generally making complete to answer its purpose.

There has been one case of Diphtheria at Eaton Bray in a child which resulted in recovery—an incidental case, nothing particular to account for it. This was in October.

A case of Diphtheria was notified to me on the 8th of August, at Heath, in a woman whose illness had occurred so recently that she had walked from the adjoining parish of Great Brickhill, Bucks., in another district, so lately as the 5th, to visit a friend in Heath (our district). They had to send for a doctor at once, who, however, sent a second notification to me on the 11th, as Phlegmonous Erysipelas, thus giving myself, as Medical Officer of Health, the opportunity of choosing which. I decide for the Erysipelas, as that seems to *take* more with the general circumstances, although, of course, I did not see the patient. She died later on the day the last notification was made out—that is the 11th—so the case was an imported one into our district, and necessarily taking its causation from elsewhere. The Medical Officer of Health of that district gives information that the woman's cottage at Brickhill was old, but not particularly damp; that she had made a previous visit to Heath, and had assisted at the obsequies of a person who had died of cancer, that the smell was very bad and had made her ill. This seems to point to a septic sore throat (Diphtheria), but on the whole, I think Erysipelas was most probably the cause of her death.

In the course of the month of April, I had a notice from the Port Medical Officer at Southampton, to say that a man had gone home to Heath who had come off a steamer landing at that port, on which ship one case of plague and several of small pox had occurred. The case of plague had proved fatal, but every precaution had been taken, and quarantine fully carried out before any one was allowed to leave the vessel, so the man was quite safe; but I visited him and satisfied myself, keeping him under observation a while.

WATER SUPPLY.

As to public wells—we have a deep well at Billington—ninety feet, kept in order by the District Council; also one at Egginton under the same authority. At Wingfield a public well was overhauled three years ago, owing to inhabitants complaining of scarcity of water. The well was deepened, cleaned out, new steyned, and pipes conveying the water to a cistern by the side of the road, with a pump, and this improvement I find gives entire satisfaction.

At Heath—two wells. The one in the centre of the village, 110 feet deep, with a pump house; well sunk and house built some 30 years ago. The other was sunk about 60 years ago—90 feet deep—and has been recently re-steyned and cleaned out, with new pump, at the expense of the District Council, costing £80.

Water in other districts is obtained from shallow wells with their usual dangerous character, owing to possible, or probable, and often actual contamination. One was sunk in the centre of the village green at Eaton Bray a few years ago by the Parish Council, the water of which was submitted to analysis, and proved to be absolutely pure. Its supply is, however, limited, being only a shallow well, and on one occasion ran dry, owing to an exceptional demand made upon it by some traction engines using it whilst going through. Speaking of the water-supply, I have all the time advocated a necessary reform in this direction, indeed a loan was applied for by the Eaton Bray District Council, and allowed by the Local Government Board some years ago, but it was never applied for. A sewage scheme has, however, been passed and adopted; indeed, engineering works have been begun, and are in progress at Eaton Bray. I notice that the Inspector sent down by the Local Government Board last Autumn urges a water-supply for Eaton Bray. I asked the engineer some time ago when his scheme was first being considered how he expected to flush his sewers, and he said by using the existing streams, but in dry weather such naturally run low. A new water-supply for Eaton Bray will most probably be insisted upon by the Local Government Board.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES

Have been duly inspected by the Sanitary Inspector during the year.

SCAVENGING,

Adoped at Eaton Bray some years ago, continues in operation, and is of immense service in contributing to the health of the population. Eaton Bray is the only parish that has scavenging.

NUISANCES.

84 have been looked into by the Sanitary Inspector, and in all cases, what was required to be done, was done. Eight defective drains were put in order, and all cesspools, &c., emptied and put in a clean state. Of the defective drains in question, two were at Heath, four at Eaton Bray, one at Tebworth (in the parish of Chalgrave), and one at Wingfield (also at Chalgrave). Four or five cesspools at Heath (over full) were duly emptied, also heaps of manure at Heath and Eaton Bray cleared away.

PIG-STIES.

Only one complaint during the year, and that at Eaton Bray. The sty was very ill-constructed, and almost close to a dwelling house; on our complaint the pigs were sold away and no more obtained.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS ACT.

Of this in a village district, there is not very much to be said. Of factories—that is, places where mechanical power is used—there are none. Of workshops—without mechanical power—(including 15 bake-houses and 7 workplaces,) 22 in all, whilst there are 5 home-workers premises.

All Bakehouses have been visited, and all found in good state of repair and kept clean.

At one home-workers place at Eaton Bray, there was a foul privy, which was duly cleaned out without delay.

DWELLINGS OF WORKING CLASSES.

This important and useful Act has had our attention in the year, but we have not had to recommend the closing of any cottages whatever; in fact, the decay of the rural population rather empties the worst cottages, as the remaining population have more choice of dwellings.

Vital Statistics of Whole District during 1904 and previous Years.

YEAR.	Population estimated to middle of each Year.	BIRTHS.		TOTAL DEATHS REGISTERED IN THE DISTRICT.				Deaths in Public Institutions.	Deaths of Non-Residents registered in district.	Deaths of Residents registered beyond District.	DEATHS AT ALL AGES NETT.	
		Number.	Rate.*	Under 1 year of age.		At all ages.					Number	Rate.*
				Number.	Rate per 1000 Births registered.	Number	Rate.*					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1894	4124	102	24.73	19	168.17	65	15.76			4	65	15.76
1895	4121	89	21.59	16	179.17	71	17.20			5	71	17.20
1896	4118	84	20.42	3	35.7	33	8.03			1	33	8.03
1897	4115	90	21.14	11	122.22	46	11.17			3	46	11.17
1898	4112	85	20.67	13	152.94	40	9.75			5	40	9.75
1899	4109	98	23.82	12	122.44	64	15.58			4	64	15.58
1900	4107	103	25.00	13	126.21	66	16.07			3	66	16.07
1901	4101	101	24.62	6	59.4	46	11.21			1	46	11.21
1902	4101	96	23.50	5	52.00	51	12.43			8	51	12.43
1903	4101	100	24.38	6	60.00	43	12.19			3	43	12.19
Averages for years 1894-1903	4110.9	94.8	22.98	10.4	109.52	52.5	12.93			3.7	52.5	12.93
1904	4101	103	25.11	10	97.08	60	14.63			1	60	14.63

* Rates calculated per 1,000 of estimated population.

NOTE.—The deaths to be included in Column 7 of this table are the whole of those registered during the year as having actually occurred within the district or division. The deaths to be included in Column 12 are the number in Column 7, corrected by the subtraction of the number in Column 10 and the addition of the number in Column 11.

By the term "Non-residents" is meant persons brought into the district on account of illness, and dying there; and by the term "Residents" is meant persons who have been taken out of the district on account of illness, and have died elsewhere.

Total population at all ages	4101	} At Census of 1901.
Area of District in acres (exclusive of area covered by water).	13605	Number of inhabited houses	...	
		Average number of persons per house	...	

Vital Statistics of separate Localities in 1904 and previous years.

YEAR,			Population estimated to middle of each year.	Births registered.	Deaths at all ages.	Deaths under 1 year.
1894	...	...	4124	102	65	19
1895	...	...	4121	89	71	16
1896	...	...	4118	84	33	3
1897	...	...	4115	90	46	11
1898	...	...	4112	85	40	13
1899	...	...	4109	98	64	12
1900	...	...	4107	103	66	13
1901	...	...	4101	101	46	6
1902	...	...	4101	96	51	5
1903	...	...	4101	101	43	6
Averages						
of Years 1894						
to 1903						
1904	...	...	4110.9	94.8	52.5	10.4
1904	...	...	4101	103	60	10

Causes and Ages of all Deaths during Year 1904.

	All ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 5	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 65.	65 and upwards.
Whooping-cough	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Enteric Fever	1	...	...	1	...	...	...
Diarrhoea	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Phthisis	1	...	...	...	...	1	...
Enteritis	3	...	...	1	...	...	2
Erysipelas	1	...	...	...	...	1	...
Other tubercular diseases	4	3	...	...	...	1	...
Cancer (malignant disease)	5	...	...	...	...	2	3
Bronchitis	6	1	1	...	...	1	3
Pneumonia	3	...	3	...	...	...	...
Premature birth	1	1	...	...	...	...	...
Diseases and accidents of parturition...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Heart diseases	9	...	...	...	...	3	6
Accidents	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
All other causes	25	5	2	2	2	7	10
All causes	60	10	6	2	2	16	24

Cases of Infectious Disease notified during the year 1904.

	At all ages.	Under 1.	1 to 5.	5 to 15.	15 to 25.	25 to 65.	65 and upwards.	No of cases removed to Hospital from each locality.
Small-pox	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cholera	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Diphtheria	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
Membranous croup	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Erysipelas	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Scarlet fever	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Typhus fever	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Enteric fever	15	...	...	8	...	7	...	...
Relapsing fever	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Continued fever	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Puerperal fever	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Plague	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals	17	1	8	8	8	8	8	8

Factories, Workshops, Laundries, Workplaces & Homework

1.—INSPECTION.

Including Inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors or Inspectors of Nuisances.

Premises.	No. of Inspections.	No. of Written Notices.	No. of Prosecutions
Factories (including Factory Laundries) ...	None	...	...
Workshops (including Workshop Laundries) ...	15	...	...
Workplaces ...	7	2	None
Homeworkers' Premises ...	5	1	None
Total ...	27	3	...

2.—DEFECTS FOUND.

*Nuisances under Public Health Acts :—**

Particulars.	Found.	Number of Defects. Remedied.	Referred to H.M. Inspector.	Number of Prosecutions
Want of cleanliness
Want of Ventilation
Overcrowding
Want of drainage of floors
Other nuisances
†Sanitary accommodations } insufficient
} unsuitable or defective
} not separate for sexes

Offences under the Factory and Workshop Act :—

Illegal occupation of underground bakehouses (S 101) ...	None	...	...	...
Breach of special sanitary requirements for bakehouses (SS. 97 to 100) ...	None	...	...	...
Failure as regard lists of outworks (S. 107) ...	...	...	...	...
Giving out work to be done in premises } unwholesome	...	...	...	...
} infected (S. 108)	...	...	...	...
} which are	...	...	...	...
Allowing wearing apparel to be made in premises infected by scarlet fever or small-pox (S. 109) ...	...	...	...	...
Other offences ...	...	...	...	...
Total ...	...	...	...	...

* Including those specified in Sections 2, 3, 7, and 8, of the Factory Acts as remediable under the Public Health Acts.

† For districts not in London state here whether Section 22 of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1890, has been adopted by the District Council; and if so what standard of sufficiency and suitability of sanitary accommodation for persons employed in factories and workshops has been enforced.

I think, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen, that this Report fairly covers all that can be said of our widely scattered and essentially Rural District, and I now conclude with my thanks to you, for my re-election to the post of Medical Officer, and beg to remain,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN ALEX. HEDGES,

Rutland House,

Leighton Buzzard,

March 22nd, 1905

Medical Officer of Health.









